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ABSTRACT

Teacher educators have recently devoted much attention to fostering reflection in teacher preparation programs. A teacher is most likely to reflect when he or she is faced with a conflict or tension. A post-baccalaureate English education program at the University of Minnesota employs a number of different activities to encourage its preservice teachers to reflect on such conflicts and tensions. First, the program requires teachers to review an audio or video tape of an episode with a pupil or a peer. They write a narrative of the tape and then write a reflection based on that narrative. Second, the program requires teachers to keep a journal in which they reflect on reading and discussions in their methods classes. Third, university supervisors challenge teacher perceptions by writing their own assessments of teachers' classroom activities. Fourth, the program tries to debunk simplistic, "pollyannish" notions of teaching by asking teachers to write a school ethnography. In these activities, excerpts from preservice teacher journals show a broad range of styles in reflection. One student is reluctant to criticize herself; another perceives himself as up against a system; yet another observes tension between her own standards and her students. Some strategies for helping preservice teachers in their self-evaluations would include methods of identifying types of conflicts and tensions; methods of defining conflicts between different perspectives or needs; and methods of reflecting on institutional forces constituting teaching and learning. (Contains 40 references.) (TB)

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Differences in Preservice Teachers' Self-Assessing Strategies: Coping with the Conflicts and Tensions of Teaching

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Teacher educators have recently devoted much attention to fostering reflection in teacher preparation programs (for a review, see Stewart, 1994). In seeking to foster reflection, we need to raise the question as to what it is that precipitates reflection. We are most likely to reflect when faced with some conflict or tension. Something doesn't work as we expected and we wonder why. We wonder if its our activity, our presentation, our students, the time of day, the heat, an so on. Part of the reflection process involves defining the nature of the problem or tension. I can recall teaching in an inner-city school this past Spring and experiencing a lot of difficulty with working with a particular group of students. I would leave the school to scurry back to my serene graduate level classes at the University, wondering what went wrong. It eventually dawned on me that my basic model of teaching and learning wasn't appropriate for working with these students. This led me to revise that model, adjustments that helped my teaching in the high school.

Recognizing or acknowledging these conflicts and contradictions requires a willingness to entertain doubts and concerns about the whole teaching enterprise. Unfortunately, many of the procedures for fostering reflection draw on technical models of instruction in which teachers reflect simply on whether they have fulfilled their instructional objectives. When asked to reflect on their teaching, student teachers are often reluctant to express doubts or concerns for fear of implying that they cannot make it on their own (Britzman, 1991).

Given the overriding needs to acquire practical methods and to convey an image of success, preservice teachers are also reluctant to examine their own teaching in a critical way—that is, in a

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way that recognizes the inherent conflicts and complexities of teaching and leads to the generation of ideas or strategies for dealing with them. This raises the question as to what precipitates reflection that goes beyond self-congratulations to critical self-assessment. Preservice teachers may engage in critical self-assessment only when they are openly acknowledging the conflicts and complexities that pervade their teaching experience—an encounter with a student or colleague, a discussion that goes flat, an awareness of the inequities of the tracking system.

Activities for Fostering Critical Self-assessment

In our post-bac English education program at the University of Minnesota, we employ a number of different activities to encourage our preservice teachers to reflect on the conflicts and tensions in their teaching.

Tape/narrate/reflect. One activity we use is what I will describe as a "tape/narrate/reflect" activity. In this activity, teachers audio tape or video tape a micro-teaching episode with a pupil or a peer. They then review their tapes and write a narrative about the episode. They then write a reflection based on their narrative, evaluating their teaching and giving reasons for their evaluation. We have found that the narrative foster reflection by organize perceptions of a teaching event around some unusual, extraordinary episode—an activity "bombs," a student breaks down, a teachable-moment turns out to be successful, etc. Narratives dramatize these unusual, extraordinary episodes as violations of norms or expectations (Labov, 1972).

Narratives about teaching also revolve around unfilled needs—the need for security, control, approval, maintaining the system, integrity, success, etc. (Carter, 1993; Clandinin, 1992). Given the need for control, a teacher perceives anything that threatens control as a source of conflict. Given the need for approval, a teacher may perceive feedback that implies negative judgments as questioning her abilities. Or, given the need to maintain a certain system of teaching, a teacher may perceive challenges to that system as being in conflict with her commitment.

If a need is thwarted or denied, teachers may then dramatize the denial of their need (Wood, 1992). For example, one of our teachers, Joyce, has a strong need for affiliation with others, particularly her students. In a narrative account of her first day at an urban junior high school, she

describes a meeting of an interdisciplinary team of teachers, with expectations that they would "share concerns as well as ideas and provide for each other needed peer support." However, she finds that "the players were tired, frustrated, and ready to move to another league."

> Sitting in a circle, the six adult members squashed themselves uncomfortably into the junior high-sized desks and eventually came to stare at me. Mr. F. was busy cutting out a new seating chart for his first hour class and made no effort to introduce me to the gang. Therefore, I took the initiative to introduce myself, including some background information about my program. Without my prompting, the Geography teacher, Mrs. P, and Mr. F., who was apparently listening after all, began to tell me why they couldn't wait to get out of teaching junior high and instead move on to high school instruction...Biting my lip until I tasted blood, I finally let out the assertion that I indeed had chosen this setting and this age group because, for some inexplicable reason, I really liked junior high students. The "team" just smiled at me knowingly and said, in confidence-shattering unison, "You'll learn, honey. You'll learn..."

In reflecting on the conflict between expectation—as driven by her need for affiliation with students, and the reality of her colleagues' attitudes, Joyce perceives the school as constituted by a culture whose attitudes she rejects. As she notes, "The students at this school and other schools like it deserve more than tired teachers with tired ideas."

Narratives also revolve around instances in which events do not follow the expected scripts or scenarios (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991). For example, student talk or interruptions during a lecture are perceived as deviations from expectations as to what constitutes appropriate student response to a lecture.

In order to recognize these deviations from scripts, teachers first need to identify their use of certain scripts. For example, Martha describes a conference with one student, Jason, who is writing a sketch on Nat Turner for a school event in which students assume the roles of notable, historical people. She finds that Jason is overwhelmed with a lot of notes he has taken about Nat Turner and doesn't know how to begin his paper. So, she encourages him to reflect by asking "What do you know about this guy? What is he famous for?"

> Boom. All he needed was a chance to speak. His lack of writing was not an act of rebellion; his slump against the wall was not directed at the assignment itself or at me, a I self-consciously worried. He was stumped. He had all this information—he was bursting with it—and simply didn't know how to place it, didn't have a clue as to when to begin, how to share it with someone else through his writing. He talked and I listened, asking questions to fill in the gaps of the story he told. I took brief notes as he spoke, noting the highlights of his telling, what he was focusing on. By the end, I was able to help create a frame, a loose outline, in which he could then fill his wealth of details. When I left the class that day he had a screen full of writing.

Martha is aware of her script as helping Jason to "create a frame, a loose outline" for his writing. She is also able to note the limitations of her scripts. For example, she describes a discussion she was leading in which one of her three students made a lot of sarcastic remarks:

> Sarcasm. Witty comments. What do you do with them? When do you acknowledge them? What if they are demeaning towards you or one of the other students? I am fairly sarcastic myself and know I am going to have to use caution. Throughout the role play it was Gordon who threw out (but not up) the challenging comments. I either ignored his comments completely and moved on with the group or a few times worked to involve him in a more constructive way (i.e., asked him to read, to offer a suggestion for our list). What if you have 10 demanding such attention? Would establishing ground rules for discussion help?

In reflecting on this discussion, she describes the tension between her usual discussion scripts and challenges to those scripts in the form of sarcastic remarks. Her written reflection shows that she is willing to grapple with challenges to her scripts, and in so doing, she attains an awareness of the limitations of those scripts.

And, as Bakhtin argues, the language multiple competing voices that reflects different ideological stances. Our preservice teachers often frame their narratives around the ambiguity of assuming the voice of "teacher," but still being a "student teacher." As one of our teachers, Jeff, noted: "I think going into the school as a student teacher is like driving down the road with a big "student driver" sign on you car. People look at you as if you are in between worlds—not really a

teacher but yet not a student." At times, their perceptions of their teaching roles, for example as "expert" or "authority" conflicted with their needs—e.g., for affiliation with their students.

Teachers also share their tapes and self-reflection with small groups of peers, who provide them with feedback. They then write an informal reflection on the feedback session itself, focusing on aspects of their teaching that have been highlighted or questioned by peers. In giving their feedback, peers also respond from the perspectives of students, administrators, parents, and cooperating teachers, resulting in conflicting perceptions of the same teaching episode. They then consider reasons for the differences and similarities illustrated by these different perceptions.

Peer-dialogue journals. During their methods courses, the teachers keep journals in which they reflect on their readings, discussions, and classroom experiences. They then share those journals with their peers, reflecting on each others perceptions. Knowing that they are writing for someone with a different perspective encourages teachers to reflect on the limitations of their own perspectives. As part of a portfolio process, at the end of each quarter of coursework, students selected journal entries from the beginning, middle, and end of their journals, and reflected on changes in their thinking as represented in these three entries.

Post-observation conferences. Teachers' perceptions are similarly challenged by their university supervisors, who write detailed narrative descriptions of their observations of the teachers' classrooms. During post-observation conferences, supervisors ask preservice teachers to describe and evaluate the observed class events. Immediately after the conference, the supervisor notes whether or not the teachers describe problems or difficulties associated with their instruction and the nature of those problems or difficulties. More specifically, they are asked to describe:

- what teachers perceived to be successful or positive aspects of their experiences and reasons why they were successful or positive
- what teachers perceived to be problems or difficulties and/or reasons for problems or difficulties
- the teacher's predominate focus, i.e., self, students, other teachers, plans/goals, roles, curriculum, instructional issues, or social context

- any tensions or conflicts between these and/or other components
- any examples of the teacher critically examining their practice or their own theories/beliefs.

Supervisors then share these perceptions with the student teachers, modeling ways of reflecting on conflicts and complexities. We have found that this systematic guide to observation and post conferences is helpful for both the supervisors and the teachers. It also provides us with an additional way to explore our preservice teachers' growth and development.

School ethnographies/ literacy autobiographies. In our methods courses, we try to debunk simplistic, pollyannish notions of teaching, and to present a realistic portrayal of institutional life as rife with conflicts and complexities. In observing the culture of schools and interviewing students as part of writing their own school ethnographies, our preservice teachers frequently encounter similar conflicts and complexities. We then ask them to define their own stance towards these conflicts and complexities, requiring them to reflect on their own relationship with the culture of their school. In addition, teachers write literacy autobiographies of their own past schooling experiences in literacy education, experiences that are filled with tensions (Knowles, 1993).

All of these tasks—analyses of audio or video tapes, journals, ethnographies of schools, literacy autobiographies —provide a variety of forums for stimulating reflection. This raises the research question as to what degree and why are preservice teachers able to reflect on conflicts and complexities. In a research project conducted with a colleague, Diane Tedick, we examined selected preservice teachers' reflections in terms of their willingness to grapple with conflicts and complexities. We analyzed their reflections in these tasks as well as their responses to a series of interview questions about their own teaching. We are currently studying their reflections in their first and second years of teaching.

Differences in Preservice Teachers' Ability to Reflect on Conflicts and Complexities

Our teachers fell on a continuum ranging from being reluctant to acknowledge any conflicts and complexities, to being overwhelmed by conflicts and complexities, to demonstrating thoughtful, reflective analysis of conflicts and complexities.

Michelle. Michelle is a bright, articulate, confident, outgoing teacher who readily espouses her beliefs and ideas about teaching. She believes strongly in the value of motivating students and facilitating positive social interactions in the classroom. She was able to successfully model small and large group discussions.

Michelle is very confident about her own abilities. As she noted, "Any lessons I've taught in the past I've been able to prepare the week beforehand and get the information I need and so then I walk into the situation something of an expert simply because I know what I am talking about." Her belief in the value of facilitating discussions is dominated by her strong need to control the direction of class discussion. Given her careful planning, she closely follows her scripts for classroom discussion. As she notes, "Sometimes I do have an agenda, and they know that...I figure out when it's appropriate to write, when it's appropriate to speak. This can be flexible according to student needs."

While Michelle espouses the value of facilitating discussion, her supervisor perceived some disparities between her beliefs about facilitating discussion and what was actually happening in the classroom. However, when he pointed these out to her, she was reluctant to grapple with these disparities, preferring to focus on positive aspects of her teaching.

Her lack of self-criticism is evident in her narrative about teaching a tenth grade class on Ibsen's "A Doll's House."

> Overall it felt like a pretty typical day. There are about six students in this class who are almost always too chatty, and one girl who alternates between being a model student and an awful disruption. Today the talkers were not good, but their work in pairs was much better and on-task for longer than I would have expected.

The above-mentioned girl was good for most of the hour until she was offended by another student, at which point she loudly let the other girl have it, unsettling the whole class. I've got a pretty good rapport with this student, so I was confident that she would calm down quickly, (she sits right next to my desk for a reason!) and she did, with a little help from me.

The outburst prefaced the handing back of tests ten minutes before the end of the hour, so until that point I think the lesson was good and the students were on track with a good understanding of the play so far. I think I accomplished everything I intended.

What happened? I gave the assignment and counted them off into numbered pairs according to where they were sitting. Each pair discussed and answered one of six questions on the board about the play. The pairs shared their responses with the class, beginning with the number one groups and moving around the room in order. I made the important points for the day as we went.

The following are some of her reflections on her narrative:

The noise level was a little higher than I comprehended throughout. I guess I've got a higher threshold for background noise when it's my own classroom and I'm in control; I'm sure that I would have been less comfortable with this had I observed it in another classroom. I come off as very confident and collected, and I guess I am for the most part.

I was pleasantly surprised to see how often during the hour I was smiling or laughing. These kids like attention and will think up funny things to get it, but as long as we stay on-task I don't mind. And my class rarely deviates from the time-frames established by [the cooperating teacher].

I hesitated to let this class do any more small group work because they're too social and abuse the opportunity, but the pair work seemed to be a good compromise and to work well. Certainly I believe that students often learn more from their peers than from adults, so I structured the assigned questions so that students would bring out the point I wanted to make. I think it worked well.

Much of the focus of Michelle's narrative and her reflection was on herself. She evaluates the students primarily in terms of whether or not they deviate from her planned scripts. She rarely steps outside of her own perspective to adopt or entertain alternative perspectives.

One explanation for Michele's reluctance to acknowledge tensions or conflicts in her teaching is her sense of self-satisfaction about her teaching. While she may have been successful in her student teaching, over the long haul, her reluctance to acknowledge disparities between theory and practice may ossify her potential for growth.

Steve. Steve is an energetic, outgoing, athletically-oriented teacher who perceives teaching as a system in which he assumes the roles "expert" and "authority" and the students assume reciprocal roles of "learners," who respect authority because "respect is the most important thing." He notes that "they know they can't cross a certain line with me." He defines the characteristics of the teacher role in terms of status or power relationships:

> Don't try to be on a level too far above them and speak down to them, but still maintain some distance from them because you have to, you have to allow your students to respect you and to value your authority on the subject, so you can't try to be a peer either.

In contrast to Michelle, who also had a need for control, Steve openly acknowledges conflicts and complexities, particularly the conflict between role expectation and performance. He is concerned about being perceived as someone who lacks knowledge: "One of the things I'm most worried about is if a student surpasses my knowledge on something....I'd worry that the student would think that this guy doesn't know anything." He is consistently concerned with "not screwing up" relative to the expectations of being the "expert teacher." He is "scared of the unknown," of deviations from the traditional teacher/student role expectations.

Because he assumes that individuals are responsible for their own success, Steve holds himself responsible for what happens in the classroom. In reflecting on his teaching of one class, he notes that "I wish I could find a way to get students to be more responsive" and "I wish I could point out certain features in the text, but I don't have the book." In continually focusing on the "I"

as the primary agent, he turns the blame for his performance in on himself. This was evident in a narrative about an incident in the lunchroom:

> I went into the teacher's lounge/cafeteria for lunch while my cooperating teacher went out to get his lunch in the kitchen. I went in and looked where I thought the silverware usually was and there was none left so I went back out to the kitchen to get a fork—no big deal, right? Well, my cooperating teacher saw me and asked me if there were any forks left in there and I said I didn't see any, so he had the cook bring some more back. When I got back there they other teacher saw I'd gotten a fork and then told me where they usually were and there they were all right, a ton of them. So then the cook came back with a bunch more and the teachers were saying things to her which basically said, "No false alarm, it was just the *new* guy." I felt like such a dork! So humiliating!

In this narrative, Steve dramatizes the conflict between an outsider versus insider perspective. Given his need for control, he is frustrated by being an outsider who has difficulty becoming an insider. However, rather than reflect on ways of reconciling this conflict, he shifts the blame to the school staff:

> It's all a function of this feeling of intrusion, like I'm such an outsider at their school. My cooperating teacher has been good to me, but the principal won't even acknowledge me and most of the other teachers don't go out of their way to say hi or introduce themselves. I feel like such an intruder to go up to them and introduce myself.

Rather than reflecting on how as an "outsider" he could become a member of the school staff, he maintains his stance as a beleaguered "outsider" who lacks support. In his peer-dialogue journal, he reflects on the difficulty of planning without knowledge of resources:

> I think I'll have problems writing lesson plans because I won't know what resources are available to me. [My cooperating teacher] uses a couple of videos of peer conference groups he'd taped a few year ago, and I wouldn't know on such short notice, on my own, that things like that are available. It's really easy to say, "Ask your teacher what's available," but that's not realistic. You don't plan your resources around what lesson you're teaching. A lot of

> lesson planning is that you know what you've got to use and you plan what you'll teach around it...Meanwhile, I can't sit there and ask him to tell me everything that's available to me every time I try to plan a lesson—there'll always be stuff you don't think to mention.

Having raised this issue of how to plan without knowledge of resources, he then has difficulty knowing how to deal with it. As with the forks incident, he retreats back to his "outsider" stance:

> I just think it'll be so much easier when I'm actually teaching in my school to classes in classroom with resources and those of colleagues. But until then, I'm going to have to fight this battle alone ... (emphasis added).

Steve's images of the teachers echo Brannon's (1993) patriarchal, male loner narratives that focuses primarily on the teacher as the primary agent, with less attention to students' perspectives. He couches the conflict primarily in terms of himself versus the school, but with little self-criticism or attention to ideas for resolving conflict. This could be due to the fact that as a student teacher, Steve views himself to be powerless in the situation.

Another characteristics of both Michele's and Steve's reflection is that they are primarily focusing on their own self-survival. In studying differences in preservice teachers' levels of reflection, Vicki Kubler LaBoskey (1993) distinguishes between "Common-sense Thinkers" and "Alert Novices." "Common-sense Thinkers" were more focused on their own immediate, short term needs and concerns. They tended to perceive teaching and learning according to a transmission model of instruction. And, they relied more on personal experience [or "institutional biographies," as Britzman (1986) calls them] in learning to teach, assuming that because they had been in classrooms as students, they already knew enough about teaching that they perceived knowledge about teaching to be of little use. In their reflections, they focused on "how to" or "what works" questions. In contrast, the "Alert Novices" focused more on students' perspectives, perceived the teacher as a facilitator, and were open to acquiring new knowledge about teaching. Relevant to our own study, they assumed that perceptions need to be tentative and open to further feedback and verification from others. They were more concerned with questions like "Why am I doing what I

am doing?". For LaBoskey, these differences suggest that an open-mindedness, willingness to suspend judgment, and "passionate creed" (p. 31) are essential to teacher reflection.

Joan. One example of an "Alert Novice" is Joan. As someone from the East Coast teaching in Minnesota, she perceives herself as an "outsider" whose values were clashing with the midwestern values constituting the ethos of her school. Her attempt to "exploit my 'otherness' as a Easterner...is not easy for me because it feels like two roles or different people." She sets high standards for herself and her students. However, she is frequently frustrated by failing to meet those standards. As she notes, her goal of reaching all of her students can be "overwhelming":

> [My cooperating teacher] laughs at me because she says I want to care about them all, but it's impossible, and after a while you just get the pink slips about suspension or hospitals or babies and think, "oh well" and throw it in your pile and that's it. Which tends to conflict with our lofty goals of student-centered teaching and reaching each one and making a difference.

Joan recognizes a conflict between her standards and students she perceived to be unmotivated. She has "plenty of patience with students who are trying to learn but little patience with students who are unmotivated or disruptive. I am also not patient with myself, which can lead me to be frustrated quickly."

Joan also believes that teachers may be reluctant to challenge students. In discussing the issues of gender and learning, she argues that teachers may assume that a subject such as math is too difficult for females. She argues that female teachers may then be less willing to allow female students to struggle with a subject. "Women are socialized to be caretakers and you have to be careful about what that means. For me that means making them learn which means letting them struggle."

She is also continually grappling with the complexities of what to include in the English curriculum. In reflecting on the need for diversity in the literature curriculum, she notes that "it is hard to balance so many things: gender of author, gender of characters, race of author, cultural and social aspects of characters, etc. to try to get pieces that 'hit' all the students in the class and give a 'fair' representation. It seems impossible to include everything."

In a narrative about an 11th grade class discussion of *Death of a Salesman* , she describes her own teaching scripts:

> I made sure students in the class were quiet throughout the groups' discussion by warning them beforehand and also monitoring as the class progressed. Before each group completed their talk, I made sure there was an opportunity to ask questions or add additional observations. I was pleased to see that a few students did take me up on this because usually they are willing to let it go and be more indifferent. I tried to elaborate on students' comments, link their comments together, and generate interest in the other students by frequently using students' names who originally make the comment. However, once the discussions began I did not talk very much.

In reflecting on a videotape of the class, she is critical of both herself and her students:

> I am surprised that I don't sound more annoyed when I ask for their attention the third time because inside I feel aggravated and I assumed I sounded that way. I don't vary my voice as much as I thought I did, and felt like the beginning of class was boring. I was surprised that my helping the blind student looked so natural on the tape because inside I always feel so awkward. I wish that my students in this class were more willing to take risks and dive in; they are so cautious and look for my approval too often. I thought that some of the discussions went very well, but they could have used more textual evidence to back up their points. Part of this had to do with the fact that I collected the written part, which I did to avoid having students sitting there working on their homework while other groups talked.

She notes how beliefs, scripts, and roles shaped her perspectives:

> I try not to interrupt the students even when I don't agree with what they are saying. When the second group began talking about Willy's dream changing at the end, I wanted to interrupt and question them more carefully. But I held my tongue, knowing they would get the idea that they were "wrong" and I was "right." I was happy I did this in the long run because then one of the other students actually questioned it himself and probed them for while. As difficult as it is for me, I have found that if I create an environment where it is okay to ask questions, it

> usually pays off to wait and give students the opportunity to take over what would be my traditional role—which I guess goes back to power and beginning from where they're at and trying to move forward. I will insert my ideas, but not in an authoritarian way. I try to adopt the posture of another learner in the room, and that seems to work the best.

When faced with these tensions between teaching ideals and the realities of a school's curriculum, another study (Driscoll & Nagel, 1993) found that preservice teachers adopt different strategies. Some simply accept the practices operating in the schools. Others, such as Steve, are confused, uncertain, or frustrated by the discrepancies. And others, such as Joan, reject the practices as conflicting with their own beliefs. Given her strong need to succeed, she uses her sense of dissonance to formulate new beliefs about teaching. For example, she notes that "as difficult as it is for me, I have found that if I create an environment where it is okay to ask questions, it usually pays off to wait and give students the opportunity to take over what would be my traditional role."

Now in her second year of teaching in a middle school, Joan is still grappling with the tensions between her high academic expectations and the very traditional curriculum and colleagues. Given her frustration with this situation and her commitment to meeting high expectations, she may experience teacher burn-out, one of the unfortunate consequences of a highly reflective teacher.

Jeff. Jeff is easy-going, articulate, and somewhat older than the other preservice teachers. In his reflection, in contrast to Steve and Joan, he is more willing to adopt the students' perspectives. When asked to define the characteristics of a teacher, he highlights the notion of "engaging...a teacher who can pick up on something and draw students into the conversation." Given this role, he focuses on the degree to which students are engaged with their learning. He cites the need for students to make "connections between what [they're] learning and why [they] have to learn it," noting that unless they "know why they're learning they become bored with it or they don't do it at all, and they become disengaged." He also perceives himself as a "coach" who "allows kids to go through the writing process, letting them fall down and make mistakes, modifying when there is a need."

Jeff also notes that he deviates from rigid adherence to certain scripts. For example, he notes that he insists on students' adhering to assignment deadlines. However, he "finds [himself] compromising when kids come in tears." And, in developing lesson plans, he recognizes the need to "be flexible enough to allow for change and freedom to accommodate for things we may not have foreseen in the initial design." He is also aware of how his scripts vary according to context:

> In my observations at the high school, I noted times when the teacher would throw out something to discuss, and the whole room would explode with debate and conversation. And then at other times, the teacher would ask a question, and then nothing. I think there are going to be times when things click and times when you get zero.

He also recognizes that certain scripts work for some teachers but not others.

> My cooperating teacher is much more structured—teacher centered than I am. It works for her and is effective. I give them a little bit of that, but I like them to think more. I think a loose structure works best for the kids...but I need some structure.

He was also willing to be critical of his own scripts. In reflecting on a discussion of a short story, he notes that "I taught the text. I know that's not the right way to do it. Half the class didn't do well."

In reflecting on his work in an urban magnet high school that contained a range of separate programs, he is frustrated by the fact that the larger "system can really work against teachers instead of facilitating success. It demands average mediocrity." He is also frustrated by conflicts between the university program and the school as well as conflicts between programs within the school. He cites instances of students who were influenced by the differences between the magnet international baccalaureate program and the "regular" program in the school. He notes that the parents were "pushing kids into the magnet classes for safety reasons," even when they lacked the ability to succeed in the magnet program.

In contrast to the other teachers, Jeff is not overwhelmed by these conflicts and complexities. He is able to put them into perspective of larger institutional forces. He argues that the differences between programs in the school may have as much to do with economic factors as

biases based on ethnicity: "I think that there are similar statistics with low economic white students." He also places blame on "our society as a whole and our school structure" that "haven't been willing to deal with these issues because there are still a lot of prejudices involved because these students are Black or Hispanic." He is also willing to confront these conflicts and complexities as an "idealist" who is "not discouraged by what's happening now, who demands change and does not accept the status quo." Rather than focus on his own immediate needs and concerns, he entertains alternative strategies for dealing with conflicts and complexities. As someone who is older than the other teachers, Jeff may have had more experience in different work situations in which he has confronted similar conflicts and complexities.

Strategies for Fostering Reflection

As illustrated in the examples above, these teachers vary considerably in their reflection process. Each focuses on certain types of tensions or conflict of their teaching experience. Michelle is reluctant to criticize herself or to view the conflicts and complexities inherent in the teaching profession and in schools; Steve perceives himself as up against the system; Joan perceives tensions between her standards and herself and her students; and Jeff empathizes with his students' needs and concerns against the limitations of the school system.

Let me propose some strategies for helping these preservice teachers, strategies that may vary according to the level of teacher reflection.

Identifying the types of conflicts and tensions. The preservice teachers in this study were grappling with a number of different types of conflicts and tensions. As illustrated in Figure 1, in reflecting on their teaching, teachers apply different *perspectives*: their beliefs, roles, needs, and teaching scripts. They then perceive conflicts between different *aspects of teaching*: self, students, other teachers, plans/goals, curriculum, instructional issues, and the social context. For example, based on her need to fulfill high academic standards, in her present job, Joan perceives a tension between the traditional school curriculum and her own sense of self as highly achievement oriented. Having identified the type of conflict, teachers can then reflect on the reason for the conflict, in this case, her needs.

By helping teacher identify these types of conflicts, I can begin to encourage reluctant self-reflectors such as Michelle to even acknowledge the problematic nature of their teaching. In reacting to Michelle's glowing self-perceptions, I criticize our own teaching, modeling the process for her, hoping that she may reciprocate by demonstrating some degree of self-criticism. I may, for example, discuss conflicts I perceive between my plans/goals to elicit autobiographical responses to a story and my choice of methods, a large group discussion in which students were reluctant to share their autobiographical experiences. I then explain this conflict as having to do with my belief that students will willingly share their private experiences.

By reflecting on these reasons, teachers then begin to perceive the limitations of their beliefs, needs, roles, and scripts, leading to some modification or change in those beliefs, needs, roles, and scripts. Realizing that my belief was a delusion, I then modify that beliefs.

Defining conflicts between perspectives. Teachers may also reflect on tensions and conflicts between perspectives—for example, between role and need—may lead to a sense of confusion as to which perspective is the most valid. Robin, while reflecting on her journal entries from the quarter, struggled with her need to please her cooperating teacher and her desire to focus on her students. Her struggle illustrates the conflict inherent in the role of a student-teacher. She says:

> I become more interested in the students and less concerned about what my coop teacher thinks of me ... [and] I'm certain my ability to relax and to stop worrying so much about how I was viewed by her helped immensely in achieving the relationship that we did. After things settled down, I found myself noticing more things about the students ... It took me an entire quarter to run the gamut and come back to the conclusion that teaching is about students. To be an effective teacher, I must find out as much as possible about the students. I must observe them as much as possible; and I now ask myself, how can I do this if I spend all the time wondering about who is observing me?

Robin contrasts her role being "interested in the students" with her need to project an image of successful teacher. Her role may be understood from her own "insider" perspective as opposed

to the "outsider" perspective of her cooperating teacher or student teacher supervisor. This conflict in perceptions was frequently alluded to by other preservice teachers.

Preservice teachers may also reflect on conflicts in the language or register they use in constituting their teacher role. In reflecting on a literature assignment, Martha defended the value of a close reading of the story against a more response-centered approach advocated by the instructor of her literature methods course.

> I am having some resistance to focusing on the personalizing of the text. My guided assignment is very text-centered. I am assuming that the students can become involved with the text without immediately connecting it to their lives. Relevance. So Suzy, what did you do in school today? Talked about swamps. Is that relevant? Maybe not in terms of short term goals, but in the larger context of the class it could be. I think, however, that I cannot force myself to avoid issues about which I feel strongly (at least not for long). After honing some of these close reading skills, it would be great to turn them onto some of the more charged and controversial ideas within the text (i.e., the ethnic and gender politics, etc.).

In this reflection, she adopts multiple voices representing competing perspectives, whose meaning is constituted by her social relationship with the methods instructor. She adopts the voice of the parent who may be concerned with acquiring relevant knowledge in the classroom. She also adopts the perspective of her literature professors who have taught "the power and joy one can have in reading through a text, weaving through the interconnected meanings and images within it." And, she adopts another voice of a teacher who wants to grapple with political issues and ideas in the classroom. In reflecting on the competing voices in their own narratives, teachers recognize the institutional tensions that are shaping their experience. Through her reflection, she is dramatizing the tensions between these competing perspectives on attitudes towards literature instruction. What's important is that she is aware of these tensions, an awareness that leads her to begin to grapple with assumptions underlying literature instruction.

Reflecting on institutional forces constituting teaching and learning. In addition to reflecting on their own teaching strategies, teachers could also reflect on those institutional forces

that shape teaching and learning. One of the major criticisms of the teacher reflection movement has been that it assumes that teachers focus on their own behaviors rather than the ways in which institutional forces or ideological orientations serve to constrain their experience (Smyth, 1992). For example, when student teachers experience difficulty in adjusting to a school or classroom culture, they often blame themselves for their difficulties rather than the institutional forces that shape their attitudes and behaviors. As Deborah Britzman (1991) documents, during their student teaching, preservice teachers are often socialized to adopt an individualistic, "sink-or-swim" model of teaching that assumes that teachers must make it on their own. They were told that they needed to be in control of their classrooms, implying that they were the central, organizing force in the classroom around which all learning revolved. In reflecting on her experience, a student teacher may then blame herself rather than the larger institutional constraints limiting her experience.

Identifying competing "voices" in written reflections. To focus attention on institutional forces, we ask them to review their journal writing, noting how their language or "voices" represent conflicting ideological perspectives of themselves or of others. We also encourage them to identify instances of what Bakhtin (1981) described as "monologic discourse"—official bureaucratic pronouncements that seek to mask conflicts and complexities. By doing so, teachers begin to perceive themselves as ideologically situated by "various discursive practices which have produced them and which both enable and delimit their possible actions" (McCormick, 1992, p. 223). For example, in reflecting on the different voices or selves constituting her literature instruction, Martha recognizes the conflicts between the different ideological perspectives constituting her teaching approach. Similarly, in conducting research for their school ethnography papers, teachers analyze various documents representing different ideological perspectives on the school—that of the administration, school board, teachers' unions, community booster club, students, parents, etc. In doing so, they must then consider how their own beliefs and attitudes are consistent with or different from those espoused by these different groups.

Entertaining optional perspectives and teaching strategies. Once teacher identify tensions and conflicts, they may then seek to define alternative perspectives and optional teaching

strategies as solutions to their concerns. Joan and Jeff were more likely to entertain different ways of looking at the teaching than were Michelle or Steve. This suggests the need to model the process of entertaining optional perspectives on teaching, adopting both "insider" and "outsider" perspectives. For example, Michelle and Steve would have benefited from adopting the perspectives of their students in planning activities, asking themselves, how will my students react to this activity. If for no other reason, such an experience helps teachers to see the complexity of pedagogy and to empathize with the many participants in the pedagogical encounter. In the words of Frederick Erickson, "neither the outsider nor the insider is granted immaculate perception" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. ix).

Joan and Jeff were also more likely to entertain optional teaching strategies than were Michelle and Steve, who stuck rigidly to one singular strategy or script. By learning how to entertain optional teaching strategies, teachers such as Michelle and Steve may begin to move away from their own absolutist conception of teaching.

Avoiding teacher disillusionment and burnout. In reflecting on tensions and conflicts, some teachers such as Joan may become so overwhelmed with the problematic nature of teaching that they become disillusioned, possibly leading to burnout. For these teachers, it is important to provide them with a sense that they are not alone--that other teachers are experiencing similar misgivings about the whole enterprise. By sharing their doubts and concerns with others, these teachers formulate a collective critique that verifies the validity of their own singular perspectives (Miller, 1990).

In summary, we need to move away from technical models of reflection to encourage preservice teachers to reflect on the tensions and conflicts inherent in teaching and learning. This requires us to encourage preservice teachers to not only openly acknowledge these tensions and conflicts but also to use those reflections to improve their teaching.

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Figure 1: Types of Perspectives on Conflicts and Complexities in Relation to Different Aspects of Teaching